

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.

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WHY NOT LEAD?

- ¶ Men are not yet entirely free from the ancient thralldom that has made them accept what they see in a printed book, or what a loud voice proclaims, or what a high personage says.
- ¶ But now and then great bodies of people throw off the mental bondage that authority has put upon them, and see the facts of their environment as they really are.
- ¶ When will the teachers of the race take the step that shall make them the leaders of the race?
- ¶ The answer: When they come to realize that the ideals and standards of their profession are not thot out by themselves, but by others for them.

TWO EXPERIMENTS IN SOCIAL EDUCATION*

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IN 1906 I OFFERED a course in what I called *The Opportunities of Our City*. The title was soon reduced by the girls to the simple words: "Seeing Boston." Their name was better than mine. To enable them to see Boston as a living place of which they were part was my aim. I wanted to cut for them a cross-section of the live city without thereby disturbing the city. I wanted them to see Boston as what our useful business slang calls "a going concern."

My work was planned for thirty lessons alternating between visits to characteristic institutions in Boston and papers or discussions on what we were to see or had seen. At the first meeting I tried to show them the physical and the commercial significance of a city like Boston. We studied a large map showing the surrounding bay and ocean and then took up for investigation questions like the following:

Why do we have cities, and what is the reason for their existence?

On what does the prosperity of a city depend?

What towns are likely to grow fastest?

What institutions are sure to spring up in any city?

(e. g. schools, churches, markets, transportation, lighting service, water-supplies, hospitals.)

What problems are likely to arise in any city?

(disease, poverty, fire, question of taxation, education.)

What are the advantages of city life?

What are the disadvantages?

What is there significant in the situation in Boston?

(Relation to harbor, railroads, largest city in the state, character of early settlers.)

What are the principal departments in the city?

* Read before the Conference on Social Education in High Schools, of the Religious Education Association, Cleveland, O., March 10, 1913.

What are the principal occupations of men? Of women? Of children over 14?

What occupations are best paid? Why?

What occupations are underpaid?

Next (in order to give its life history) we took up the past of Boston. We spent one lesson in study and one in visiting the Old State House, from whose window Washington had reviewed the army, and the strange old market, Faneuil Hall, our cradle of liberty. In contrast with the tiny state house of past days, I wanted them to see the new state house with its ever wider spreading wings, and I took the class to witness the inauguration of our governor. They had never seen the quaint ceremony before, nor had I, and when the Senate, the Judges, and the past Governors were received by the House of Representatives standing, when the new governor swore to keep every law and to use his utmost ability in the service of the State, when the herald announced the election of a governor and publicly called all men to take notice and govern their conduct accordingly, we got a new glimpse of the oft-forgotten sanctity of government.

The Governor's inauguration led naturally to a study of the legislative work. I looked up the various committee hearings and took the class to a hearing on Patent Medicines. The defense of patent medicines was urged by an ardent enthusiastic representative of Lydia Pinkham, who on cross-examination was obliged to confess that tho Lydia Pinkham still in every newspaper sympathetically urged women to consult her in the cause of health, she died twenty or thirty years ago. The opposition brot out the ideal of reputable physicians—truth, openness, sharing of the benefits of all scientific discovery.

The schools and libraries of Boston came next on our list. Boston has had an exceptionally interesting school history to study, ever since 1635 when the

vote was passed that "Brother Philemon Formort shall be entreated to become schoolmaster for the teaching and nourishing of children among us." It was impressive to find how early the need of education is felt in a community. Boston had only been founded twelve years when in 1642 a law was passed by the General Court requiring parents and masters to train children in learning and in labor. Does industrial education go much further? We then studied the marvelous development of education up to the present day when Boston spends three or four million dollars a year for schools. But statistics of the spending of money meant far less than our actual visits to the schools. Seeing is believing. We visited four characteristic schools. The first I chose was the so-called "Steamboat School" in the foreign North End. It was the kind of school that little Mary Antin went to when she first found in America her Promised Land. Every dark-eyed child in the small class was joyously struggling to learn English. Their efforts over *th* and *w* were stimulated by an admirable teacher who led the enunciation and demonstration of "This is my mouth; this is the wall." In a few months they would graduate into regular classes; in a few years they would become voting citizens, the makers of the future United States. My girls saw the need of education with new eyes.

Nor were their eyes less eager when I went with them to see the schools for the blind and deaf, whose signal aim is to take away the handicaps that overwhelm the untrained when deprived of sight and hearing. It was Lincoln's Birthday when we visited the Perkins School for the Blind. Slowly but intelligently the class was fingering out the Gettysburg address, and its message thrilled with added meaning. As Dr. Howe had labored for the blind, so must we, now standing in his place, carry on the work. "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

After visiting the schools for the handicapped we took up the new movement for industrial education, making a study of an interesting report by the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial Education. It told graphically of the futile work and meagre wages earned by unskilled boys and girls in the years from fourteen to sixteen. Then to show the value of training we went as visitors to the Girls' Trade School. We saw lessons in power machine and straw-hat making; we watched the millinery and dress-making classes, and we were told of the rapid increase in wages given to girls who had successfully completed a year at the Trade School.

Our visit to and study of the Public Library and some of its branches came next. Few people realize how short an existence public libraries in our country have enjoyed, nor, on the other hand, how active is the social work of our libraries now. In Boston for two hundred years only private libraries existed. John Harvard left his tiny library of 320 volumes to Harvard College in 1630. Cotton and Increase Mather held as their most precious possession a private library of 8,000 books, but these were burned at the time of the battle of Bunker Hill. The State House Library for the exchange of documents was opened in 1826 and the first city public library not until 1854, only sixty years ago! And now do our boys and girls get all they might from the treasure-house that is theirs, built by the people and for the people? I asked different members of my class to look up:

The history of the Public Library.

The use of the library.

The art treasures.

What the library does for schools.

The branch libraries and their management.

The use of libraries for evening lectures and exhibitions.

Traveling libraries.

I gave as a final paper on libraries the topic, What is the widest and best use of libraries?

Thruout the course I tried to suggest the fascinating variety of a city. The girls must re-discover Boston with the

zeal of a new settler. It is but our blindness that makes us tread the streets with vision darkened to their meaning.

I found thru a lawyer friend what court trials then in session were suitable and interesting, and took my group to hear the arguments in an accident case. When the little boy darted across the street and was hit by an express-cart was it or was it not his own carelessness? Was the seamstress who testified that she had seen the accident truthful in her statements? Ought the mother who (wiping teary eyes) was brot on as a closing witness by the prosecuting lawyer—ought she to have a money reward? Is a jury or a judge the more capable of rendering a fair verdict? The air bristled with social and moral questions.

Nor were there fewer moral, civic, and social questions in our trip to a conference of the Associated Charities. Here in a poor district of the city a group of faithful volunteers with a single paid secretary were helping to solve the difficult problems of poverty, illness, drunkenness, lack of work, weakness of will, that were defeating the lives of their neighbors. My girls were interested; in five minutes they felt the human appeal back of the problems presented to the conference; they realized for the first time how many and how needed are the charitable agencies in a great city. Even our study of a directory of charities budded tiny green leaves like Aaron's wand in the light of actual cases of need.

From the study of charities we turned to hospitals and put special stress on the social service work done there. Several of the class have since given a good part of their time to work of this character.

But a city is not all government, education, philanthropy. Its life surges onward in the great tide of industry, manufacture, and distribution. Our later lessons took us into this field and we made an interesting visit to the world-known Waltham watch factory. Here I found it difficult to keep my flock together, for one or two would linger long asking questions of some worker.

Our study of a city was necessarily superficial, but it was a significant surface like the surface of a great painting,

or of a field of wild flowers. The course let us taste of many experiences, nibbling a bit of each to see how it nourished us. It helped a little to make the class feel that the city was real, a living individual, christened in the baptism of hardship, struggling thru youth to full vigorous life. The visits to institutions gave to girls who had lived in a minute section of the city some idea of its size and even more some idea of its manifold problems and interests. It led them to read newspapers and reports with newly colored interest. Above all it spurred some of them at least to love their city and prepare to help it.

I come now to a second aspect of social training in which I have long been interested. Ethical teaching and discussion does, I am sure, train pupils of the high school age in fairness of judgment and in clearness of thot and action about questions of right and wrong. I have taught ethics for fifteen years in five private schools for girls in Boston. I take usually the graduating class, girls of about seventeen; but I have also taught classes varying in age from eleven to sixteen years. Two points stand out in my experience: first, that ethical questions are of compelling interest, and second, that even girls who have what is called the best of chances are often uncertain or twisted in their ideas of right and wrong.

Ethics is a dry word between the lips. Every one shies at it, but ethics the living subject is in my experience with several hundred students one of the most popular lessons in school. This interest is inevitable. Ethics is the discussion of life in action. I tell my class that in the course of our discussion every subject in the world is open to us, for there is a right and wrong about hunting big game, keeping a secret, cooking mince pies, or running a railroad. I use thruout the course illustrations as widely varying as these, but brot close to some experience the students have had or are likely within a short time to meet.

After speaking of the inherent and dramatic interest of ethics, I center all my teaching round the idea of loyalty to your own best and growing purpose. I

begin by showing the nature of responsible, as contrasted with non-moral, life. I give the class the following quotation from Professor Huxley: "I protest that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I should instantly close with the offer and should be a better and a happier man." This proposition is invariably rejected by every member of the class. Why, I ask, is it not best to be made incapable of sin and error? They answer at first that life would be dull, that there would be no credit or interest; but as I press the question farther, they see that we want choice and reject automatic goodness because without the power to choose in matters of right and wrong we are not human. Moral life is our human life and moral life is the life of choice. Thus at the very outset I try to make my classes feel our responsibility for this life which we at bottom want in spite of its danger and tragedy, and which we accept as our own to make or mar.

This direct facing of responsibility for moral choice seems to me of great importance. It means that we cannot lie down and cry that the universe is wrongly made, cannot complain under hardship or sorrow, cannot rebel at temptation. We ourselves want freedom of moral choice and all that is given to us with it in the sealed packet of the future.

This discussion of moral responsibility may seem too difficult or dry for students of seventeen. I have never found it to be other than intensely interesting and rousing to my class.

After pointing out our responsibility whenever we are awake and fully ourselves, I go on to the positive characteristics of moral life. It is always life with an aim, small or large. It is pointed like an arrow in flight to a goal near or far. To bring out the relation of a purpose to happiness I say to the class: "Do you know any one who has no purpose in life? If so describe one day in the life of such a person, and the difference between such a day and that of anyone

who has a definite aim." It has surprised me to find how well purposeless people are known by my young students. They often describe in graphic terms the languid unhappiness, selfishness and boredom of the purposeless person in contrast with the eager activity of the person who has a definite aim. Purpose always means interest. I go on to consider Interests as Sources of Health, Happiness, and Goodness, and later take up The Choice of Interests to bring out the individuality of the girls and initiate a consideration of vocations. We discuss questions such as these:

Can a person who is without any interests be good? Is it better for a man's character to have a strong interest in football or a moderate interest in study? What faults are cured by any keen interest? Does hard work increase or lessen an interest? Give an example in which an interest has helped some one you know.

Herein you see I am pressing home the truth that goodness comes from no outside demand, but is the necessary means to success in anything we believe in and have chosen as our best aim.

"Does it require any virtues to play football well?" At first there is a protest that no such abstract things as virtues are needed, but some student is sure to suggest courage, then another, perseverance, a third self-sacrifice, until it would seem that to do anything right up to the mark demands the virtue of a saint and the devotion of a hero. Any steady purpose also means conscientiousness in that field.

In our day the word conscience is rarely heard. It is shoved into the unused garret of our thot like the oil lamps and the old washstand that were essential to our grandmother's housekeeping. I find the idea of conscience blurred and dusty in the mind of my pupils. I try to link it to its earlier usage thru the tie of open-eyed loyalty to our ideal. I ask members of the class to describe the conscientious and the unconscientious way of practising a piece of music or studying a lesson in arithmetic. The conscientious act they perceive, is the open, thoro, loyal, disinterested act.

One of the best housecleaners I ever knew, when I praised the thoroughness of her work, responded, "Well, my mother always taught me to sweep out the dark corners of a room first of all into the centre of the floor; then I could not neglect them." Here is conscientiousness caught in the act. It always means brushing out the dark corners of laziness, selfishness, prejudice into the central light of truth.

"What is it that makes us go to the dentist's in spite of the recurrent temptation to put off going?" I ask. This trivial example is but a minute specimen of the great strata of right acts which we carry thru against temptation only by a clear and resolute facing of our aim and its demands on us.

We turn to the psychology of wrongdoing. Selfish acts are always more or less blinded by willful inattention. I am traveling to the city. The train is empty. I monopolize two seats with my bags, parcels, and a great bunch of azaleas that I am taking home with me. The train stops and people throng by, looking wistfully at my extra seat. I become too absorbed in my newspaper to see them. I persuade myself that there must be seats farther on, and that some one else, not I, should make room. Of course I am deceiving myself. I cannot at the same time picture the fatigue of a woman who is standing and keep my seat.

It seems to me well worth while to show that in all wrong-doing there is an element of careless or willful blindness.

I take many examples of prejudice and open-mindedness ranging all the way from unmeaning dislike to downright cruelty. I take such a case as this: "If you see a poor woman with a torn skirt, walking with two children whose faces are dirty and whose boot-buttons are off, have you a right to judge that she is slovenly?"

"I do not like you, Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell."

Has any one a right to dislike a person without in the least knowing the reason? If you had a strong prejudice against negroes or Chinamen how should you try to get rid of it?

You can easily see how the discussion of questions such as these may lead to that fairness of attitude so needed in our generation. Prejudice is very close to falsehood and the subject of truth and falsehood I imagine is found by all teachers to be of absorbing interest to any class. I give several lessons in truth-speaking. I try to show that to lie to any one is to treat him as an outcast or a weakling and is therefore an act of disdain. I try to show definite ways of increasing our truthfulness, and above all I try to prove that it is only in so far as our attitude is one of loving kindness that we can speak frank and difficult truths without giving undue pain.

My final lessons centre round the use of time. Here, carrying out my central thesis of the moral value of a growing purpose in life, I try to show that the great thieves of time are aimlessness and disloyalty. The girls all know the aimless woman who drifts down town attracted by a new hat or a bargain sale and comes back after four hours with a lighter purse and a wasted day; they know too that the busiest people have most time because their definite purpose compels loyalty.

Wise old Franklin has said almost the final words on the use of time: "Dost thou love life; then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of."

Perhaps I can best summarize my hopes of the outcome of this ethical teaching by a quotation from one of my class.

"Ethics seems to me to be a course for our thinking qualities; it enlarges our imagination. It seems to bring right before you the harm of wrong-doing; it strengthens your point of view; it gives you new ideas which are valuable and often makes firmer your old ideas.

"Ethics opens your eyes and your ears. You notice things that you never saw before, and listen to conversation that would not have interested you. It helps you to think more clearly and judge more fairly. The part of the course that stands out in my mind is Truth. All other subjects seem to belong with it. When I think of truth I think of courage too, and loyalty and honor."

THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY TEACHERS

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IN THE FALL OF 1907 the women teachers sought the advice of the School Committee concerning pensions. The result was a combined effort on the part of both the School Committee and the teachers to obtain a pension fund from the Legislature of 1908.

It is to be noted that the women started this movement. The men joined in, but disagreed on the distribution of the fund. They wanted the size of the individual pensions to be one-third of the salary, with no maximum amount. This would have given to the men the lion's share of the fund. But the women teachers were united in favor of a maximum not exceeding \$600.00 and the men finally acceded.

The School Committee then set out to divide and divert the women teachers. At the suggestion of the Committee, the elementary teachers organized a club of their own and went to the Legislature with a bill for an increase of salary.

The elementary teachers won their salary fight. The pension bill with minimum and maximum limits was passed, in spite of the attempt of the men teachers to strike out the maximum. It is to be noted that the School Committee instigated the organizing of the Elementary Teachers Club, sent the women teachers to the Legislature with both bills, and approved also of the activity of the men teachers.

In the campaign of 1908-1909 Mr. Ellis (later the author of the "gag" rule) was a candidate for re-election to the School Committee. His nomination papers were circulated by teachers, even in the schools. Teachers wrote many letters in his behalf. All this activity must have been known to the school authorities, but was allowed to go on without comment by the Committee or by the Public School Association, whose candidate he was.

In 1909 and 1910, when the pension law was being slightly readjusted, the men teachers, with the approval of the School Committee, appeared before the Legislature in their own interests.

In 1910 the women teachers tried to get the School Committee to raise their salaries. The Committee pleaded lack of funds and sent the teachers to the Legislature of 1911 for an appropriation to be used for the increase of their own salaries. So far, so good; the School Committee approved. But the Committee broke with the teachers on the demand by the latter that the Legislature specify that the new appropriation be applied strictly to the purpose for which made.

Right here we have the first signs of the School Committee disapproving of political activity. In the fall of 1911, during the general discussion at the end of a conference between the Salary Committee and the School Committee, one member of the School Committee said, "You are going to be taken out of politics, and you are going to *stay out*, and don't you forget it!"

In the campaign of 1911-1912 the Committee again disapproved, because the teachers were supporting Mrs. Fitzgerald against two School Committee-men running for re-election.

The result was the promulgation of the gag rule, February 5, 1912. This rule not only retaliated for past activities, but effectually muzzled the teachers on the five bills which the School Committee had introduced into the 1913 Legislature.

This muzzling did not please the Education Committee of the Legislature. At three of the hearings, members of the Committee expressly took members of the School Committee to task because of the gag rule. The legislators felt that they could not act intelligently on the proposed measures, without knowing the teachers' point of view, and so all five bills died in committee.

Even since then the School Committee and the Public School Association have continued to act on the apparent theory that pedagogic political activity is of two sorts: good, when they control it, but pernicious, when directed against them.

During the 1912 Legislative Campaign, Mr. Lee, of the School Committee, sent to every teacher, among the other female voters of Ward 10, an appeal to secure votes for representatives Kinney and Cox, in the interests of the schools. If he had not wished political activity by the teachers, he could easily have taken a teachers' list and checked the teachers off the Ward 10 voting list.

As recently as November 12th the Public School Association appealed to the teacher-voters for funds in aid of Miss Curtis' campaign. If we are to have "gag" rule at all it ought to be enforced impartially.

It is interesting to note that the School Committee, after allowing to pass unnoticed the soliciting of support among the women teachers by one of the Committee itself, Mr. Lee, and by the Public School Association in the fall campaign and in the recent school campaign, nevertheless censured Headmaster Thomas for endorsing the candidacy of Mr. Harris. If the School Committee were not a very reputable aggregation, circumstantial evidence would convict them of using the "gag" rule only against opponents of the Public School Association and of issuing a general indulgence to that organization. It is time the School Committee stopped playing politics with the "gag" rule.

IDEALS AND LIMITATIONS

RECENTLY SOME thirty men teachers in the City of New York have been putting forth their claims to consideration in connection with the vacant principalship of a high school. Several weeks of strenuous effort on the part of the candidates made it clear even to them who was the "best" man. *Why* he was best was not a matter of so great practical importance to the other contestants as was the fact that long before the end he came to be known as the choice of a particular educational official.

The losers may not ask questions, but other people should not feel the same constraint. In view of the fact that the one-man power to choose these highly paid subordinates has given the City some

lamentable failures in the office of principal, the system or basis of selection becomes a matter of public concern. To put some questions concretely, what else beside skill in constructing and managing school machinery is essential in a high school principal? Is it essential that the candidate be able to show his willingness to do as his sponsor-superior would have him do? Must his record be clear of all inclination to find flaws in the existing order of things educational?

As a matter of fact, the public has never been informed as to the standards for high school principals in the City. Possibly the public does not care to know. The teachers have not been informed, probably because it has not been that worth while. Nevertheless, the common mind of those members of the teaching staff who never seem inclined to push themselves into the limelight of educational politics begins to show some sign of establishing its own standards for superiors. The study of supervision presented in the March number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* marks a distinct beginning of the development of a clear conception of ideals as to what a superior officer should be. Perhaps it would be more exact to say that this is the beginning of the *expression* of ideals, for the suppression of free speech fully accounts for their not having appeared before.

When the minds of teachers are freed from official domination, it may be clear to us that under the old order none but limited standards concerning high school principals could possibly have been evolved. One mind, no matter how able it is, cannot conceive ideals out of a limited experience. The experience of great numbers, whose minds are permitted to think in freedom, naturally supplies the material for the evolution of ideals that are commensurate with the progress of the general intelligence. The almost complete absence of official ideals for high school principals in New York City is a strong indication that the educational hierarchy has been trying to do the thinking for some fifteen hundred teachers who are having most of the experience.

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This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

FOR MANY YEARS the report has gone abroad that politics has been eliminated from the New York City school system, and within a month the cry of Politics! Politics! goes up from both camps engaged in the struggle for supremacy. And both are right.

The Board of Education for years has complained that it is not legally able to direct the actions of its own subordinates, the superintendents, because the superintendents have thru some charter provisions been able to restrict all educational initiative to its own body. Now that the Board of Education has had bills

introduced into the State Legislature to bring back "to the representatives of the people the power to initiate the people's business," the superintendents are fighting for their official power—and possibly for their official lives.

Daily conflicts between the rival forces are the order of the day. Organizations of citizens and of teachers are taking sides, manifesting in the act various degrees of judgment and prejudice. The arguments presented by the opposing sides are hurled, after the fashion of brickbats. And all the while the great work done by the Hanus Committee, that has within the year investigated the New York schools system, lies useless and unrelated to the work of reconstruction that is going on.

As a social phenomenon the apparent determination of the leaders in the Board of Education to get the upper hand is interesting, and not without value to education. Business men have no patience with pseudo-scientific dilly-dallying and "red tape." Quick and decisive action and short cuts to large results are effective counter-irritants to the narrow-minded, self-sufficiency of a body of educational "experts." The New York educational experts have behind them a long history of administrative stupidity, educational shortsightedness and autocratic selfishness. They do not deserve and probably do not expect any quarter from the enemy that is now threatening to overthrow them. Nevertheless, the method of attempted advance is the method of insidious retrogression and not the method of reasoned progress. Therein lies the danger of false steps and of inevitable reaction.

Good business, let us say, would not permit the waste of the lessons of the Hanus Report. This great document deserves the attention of the best minds the City can give to it. Indeed, some of the very men who gave many months of time to the work of studying the system should be retained for further effort in the actual reconstruction of the system. With them should work in joint committee members of the Board of Superintendents, members of the Board of Edu-

cation, and principals and teachers, altogether fifteen to twenty-five persons. The entire system should lie before this committee. One year, or two years if need be, should be given to the thoro analysis of all the departments of the system, and to recommendations for reconstruction. By the very act of forming a democratic committee of this kind, some of the worst evils of the system would vanish. For the rest, the open conflict and the natural selection of ideas would bring us progress, free from the contamination of political riot.

THE PUBLIC is certainly being exploited when it is made to pay the salaries of incompetent teachers. But the dear public is well avenged in exploiting all the rest of the teachers. The tax-payer may say, in absolving his conscience, "Yes, but I give the teacher a living,"—as one provides board and lodging for an old cat. He does not realize, however, how often the teacher gives in return her life—which should, according to all standards except our prevailing economic one, always be worth more than a living.

PRACTICAL EDUCATION

The assumption is made that the mass of children must choose between an education that is *practical*, in the sense of being commercially valuable to some prospective employer, and one that is *useful*—an education, that is, which will produce useful returns to the state in terms of worthier citizenship, and to the individual in terms of life more abundant. The assumption is a false one; the only education that is worth while will take into consideration all aspects of human life. The economic facts that call for work no less than the psychological facts that call for action; the social facts that call for leisure no less than the psychological facts that call for play; the political facts that call for efficient citizenship, no less than the psychological facts that call for discipline and moral adjustment. The end of education is life more abundant.

TO LIVE OR NOT TO LIVE

A WOMAN TEACHER in a New York City high school, too honest to call pregnancy ill-health, and too ingenious to call child-rearing "further study," has been denied by the Board of Education a leave of absence without pay for the purpose of bearing and rearing a child until such time as she might be able to take up her school tasks again. Before the Board had had time to unwind the necessary amount of red tape, the teacher had given up her active duties, assuming that she was "constructively" on leave. For being absent without leave—that is, before the leave was officially granted—she is subject to dismissal for neglect of duty. At the same meeting of the Board a male teacher was granted leave of absence for organizing educational work for another city; and the official action was "retroactive"—that is, allowed the leave to begin officially before the date of action by the Board—and the teacher had actually been away from work some two weeks before the leave was officially granted. This is a good point to keep in reserve.

However, quite apart from the red tape involved, the situation is significant. The decision of the Board, made without discussion, may be technically justifiable; but from an educational point of view, as well as from a human point of view, the action was stupid and wicked. The by-laws recognize that an occasional change of work is beneficial for the teacher—and so for the system. Accordingly, teachers are granted leave to absent themselves for purposes of travel, study, the restoration of health—without pay. We have not adopted the principle of the sabbatical leave with full pay, or even with part pay, tho we have accepted the principle that there is rust in routine, and that rust may lead to ruin. But the by-laws do not recognize that fundamental fact of life known to students of life as sex and reproduction; they recognize the social fact of sex only to discriminate against woman.

The Board (with the exception of five members) seems to think that its business is confined to the regimentation of

700,000 children; it has nothing to do with the origin of those children. It seems to think that childhood is an ultimate fact; and it considers the creation of children a disgrace. It even voted to prevent discussion of the subject at the open meeting. The Board put itself on record as believing a mother less competent to train children than a spinster; it believes that the experience of motherhood, the sympathy of motherhood, the interest of motherhood are obstacles to pedagogic efficiency—it votes for the pedagogy of the maiden aunt.

The Board says in effect, if you travel in Europe or on the ocean for a year, your new experiences, your contact with human beings, your contact with human history, will broaden your outlook and increase your teaching value; if you bury yourself in a cloister and sample phrases from old manuscripts, or if you go to a laboratory and make three thousand measurements of any kind, your technical scholarship will be so enriched that you will be a better teacher; even if you go into business and sell a hundred insurance policies or a dozen parcels of real estate, you will have acquired so much knowledge of the world of affairs, that you will be a more valuable teacher. But if you undergo those physiological changes involved in mammalian pregnancy, if you become as intimate with another human soul as only a mother can become, if your heart becomes set on understanding child nature and child interest and child welfare by way of maternal experience, if you attempt to reach full maturity, your value as a teacher diminishes so much that we have no further use for you.

Then there is the question of professional status that concerns us most of all. In this country about a fourth of the women who are teaching give up teaching every year. A large number of these give it up to get married. Is a system in which teachers teach only while awaiting the wedding better off than one in which teachers teach as a life business? They do such things better in France. There the woman teacher is given two months' leave of absence *with pay* be-

fore the arrival of the baby; and she gets two months' leave of absence *with pay* for two months afterwards. And the conditions for any additional time taken from the work of the school are as favorable for mothers as they are in this country for teaching-lawyers or teaching-stock-gamblers! Only, one does not have to *pretend* that she is away "studying" or regaining health.

We shall never have a class of professional educators in this country worthy the name until all teachers, women as well as men, are trained for their work as tho they were to do that work during their working life. To work at teaching only while waiting for a better job, or while waiting for Prince Charming, is an affront to the public and an imposition on the children.

Just what is the significance of giving the president of a board of education power to assign any member of the teaching or supervisory staff to such special work of inquiry or investigation as he may wish—without approval of the rest of the board, or of the superintendents? Would that open the door to any kind of "politics"? A teacher or principal is rated by the superintendents—but he may be assigned by the president to make reports in criticism of the superintendents.

It was the "progressive" board of education that decided by an almost unanimous vote that a teacher who is guilty of motherhood is undesirable for the schools.

THE TEACHER can always plead the impossibilities of the ever-changing demands of innumerable dictators. The dictators complain of the inefficiency of the Teacher. The heart of the whole thing is wrong, because the burden is borne by a host of virtually enslaved workers with no voice. Teaching is not a profession in any sense in which other professions hold their place, viz.—by maintaining public ethical standards. The ethical standards of the individual Teacher may be ever so high, but until the profession has courage and integrity to establish standards before the public, it cannot hold a place with the great professions. — Mary F. Thompson, in "Boston Teachers' News Letter," March, 1913.

A NEW ORGANIZATION

A NEW TEACHERS' ORGANIZATION has been formed, called the Teachers' League of New York. In reply to the question "Are there not enough teachers' associations already?" the new league might point out that there are plenty of associations for advancing the personal interests of their "leaders"; there are plenty for academic and technical discussions of details of method and matter in teaching; there are perhaps plenty for lobbying before legislative bodies in behalf of this faction or that. But there is no organization that sets before itself a high ideal of professional service for teachers, with a high resolve to use every honorable—not merely legitimate—method for advancing the status of the profession, in the interests of the children and of the public.

At the meeting called for the organization of the Teachers' League, one of the District Superintendents spoke to the teachers substantially as follows: "Professional advancement? Participation in the higher functions of school management? The interests of the children? By all means! Look you after the ideal aims, and leave to others the watching of your material interests. Do not besmirch yourself with concern about wages or ventilation or hours of work." Another District Superintendent addressed the teachers in a different tone. This one said in effect: "Professional advancement? Participation in administration? The interests of the children? What have you to do with such things? You can get all the professional recognition you want now. What you really need is an organization that will support a strong lobby at Albany and get you more money. When you have plenty of money, the other things don't matter. Now, don't be foolish."

Whither shall the young teacher turn amidst such confusion of counsel?

In New York City a woman teacher is penalized for marrying by being denied the right of promotion, altho she may not be dismissed for marrying, as was formerly done.

The history of the "Gag-rule" in Boston, as told by Miss Hall in this number, will be interesting to those of our readers who believe that American methods are more effective for democracy than Russian methods.

The new democratic President of the United States has decided that this nation should give official recognition to the republican government of China. We frequently have to explain to good citizens that the democracy for which we stand has nothing to do with the party that was successful in the last national elections, and is not opposed to the republican or socialistic ideas of other fellow-citizens.

IN A NUMBER of cities the superintendents attend teachers' meetings, or send representatives, not for the purpose of "spying", but for finding out what the teachers think on educational problems. In some cities the superintendents invite representative principals and teachers to confer with them, or report to them, on important educational problems. What are they doing in your city?

THE TRUE TEST of the teacher is not his success with pupils who are clever and eager to learn, tho he should always command the sincere respect of these chosen few. His test comes with the indifferent majority, with those who don't care, with those who don't want to learn. It is a delight to a teacher to have pupils of natural capacity and intellectual background, who respond instantly to his best shot; but it is a still greater delight to see the first signs of intelligence in a dull block of clay, and witness the birth of intellectual curiosity. It may mean salvation.—William Lyon Phelps, in "Teaching in School and College."

NOTICE.

We regret that the announced article by Prof. E. C. Elliott on "The Supervisory Council" must be postponed. We hope to print it in the May number.

HAVE YOU SENT IN
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?

HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC

HERE IS A technical board that has the authority, but neither the will nor the ability to reorganize an educational system. Here is a lay board that has the will, but neither the authority nor the ability to bring about the greatly needed reconstruction. What is the solution? Shall we legislate authority to the lay board with the good will? Shall we do nothing and retain the authority for the technical board with no will but to be let alone? In the former case you risk a system that requires the highest grade of expert skill in the hands of a body of well-intentioned but relatively incompetent lay-men, who are appointed by an elective officer and who are subject in their composition to constant and adventitious change. In the latter case you do nothing to relieve an acute situation.

This is the situation in New York City. Legislation is proposed to give the Board of Education authority to construct courses of study and to determine the grades of schools. Those who have confidence in the leaders of the Board are satisfied that such authority will be used wisely; but they ask for no assurance that the Board will always be so constituted as to use wisely the power demanded. Those who for any reason have no confidence in the present City Superintendent approve the legislation because the authority he has is not being used wisely; they do not ask, however, whether, in general, the powers under discussion should be given to a lay body or to a professional body. Those who have no confidence in the leaders of the Board of Education, as well as those who admire the City Superintendent, are opposing the legislation and indulging in eulogies and "insinuations."

It is not necessary to consider the personalities of the opposed leaders. There is involved a fundamental principle, but there is no evidence that the partisans on either side have attempted to go to the bottom of the case. The

methods used in this campaign may appeal to many as being decidedly "practical." But they are decidedly shortsighted nevertheless, for whatever the outcome of the contest the real problem will not be solved.

The real problem is, how can the public—which is presumably represented by the Board of Education—get the kinds of schools it really wants? The Board of Education does not at any one time represent the interests of the whole public; it is made up as a rule of men and women of considerable leisure, and that means, as a rule, men and women who are not wage-earners. But the wage-earners represent the mass of the population, and they have problems and interests and points of view that are rarely appreciated and represented by men and women of leisure. On the other hand, the class of people whose special business it is to study and understand the educational problems of the whole population is given no opportunity to conduct its study systematically, and is never heard in the councils of the administrators of the City's school system: that is, the teachers, who come in direct contact with the children that are to be educated, who might come in close contact with the homes and the economic and social problems of these children, have no representation at all when it comes to making courses of study or determining policies. The City Superintendent has indeed a voice at the meetings of the Board, tho no vote; and he does, in a measure, represent the expert point of view; but this is not an adequate representation of the teachers' thought and experience—as is shown, for one thing, by the failure of the Board of Superintendents to keep the system within twenty years of modern needs.

What will it avail to give the lay body authority, if the public is not insured that this will be wisely used? So far as the public is concerned, it matters little whether the Board of Education has the responsibility and authority to delegate certain tasks to the experts, or the superintendents have authority and responsibility to do the tasks themselves. The

public wants certain things done, and it wants them well done. It entrusts the administration of the school system and the determination of policies to the Board of Education. It expects this Board to hire architects when it comes to erecting school buildings—it does not expect the casual builders and contractors or art students on the Board to draw up plans and specifications for the buildings to house its precious children. It expects this Board to hire accountants and actuaries when it comes to disbursing funds according to complex schedules—it does not expect the casual cashier or bookkeeper on the Board to make out payrolls and control the expenditures. It expects the Board to hire medical examiners and experts on eye-strain when it comes to safeguarding the health of the children—it does not expect casual devotees of Hygeia or disciples of Mary Baker Eddy to take direct charge of the health of the children.

The public expects its Board of Education to determine—again with the aid of experts—the most desirable location of buildings, the regulations for advancement of salaries of teachers, the grades in the teaching and supervising staff, the kinds of buildings it can afford to erect, and what it is in a position to demand in the way of health regulation. In like manner the public's point of view must determine the general character of the schools, the kinds of subjects that are to be taught, the general aims of the system. But in determining the general educational policies the lay board must confer with experts who are in a position to say definitely just what may be expected of various kinds of children at different ages, just what proportions of time should be given to various topics, just how the several kinds of work are to be presented, and how they are to be correlated. In other words, the professional work of making a course of study should be kept in the hands of professional experts; the public's work of determining school policies should be kept in the hands of the lay public. But neither can alone do its share of the necessary work. It is for the lawyers to

frame legislation that will place responsibility and authority; it is for the public to make sure that it is not overlooked in the quarrel between Commissioners and Superintendents; it is for the teachers to consider the problems involved from the point of view of the major purpose of their existence as teachers.

In the meanwhile, all legislation affecting the general powers of the several branches of the school system is but a superficial patchwork; for the city has gone to the expense of a \$60,000 investigation that should place at its disposal data necessary for a thoroughgoing reconstruction—and the proposed changes are in no sense thoroughgoing.

PENSIONS

IN THE SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, President Pritchett makes a comprehensive analysis of the subject of pensions, from the side of government service and industry as well as from the side of teachers. Four aspects of the pension problem are especially considered.

1. The justification of pensions for public school teachers. Such pensions are justified upon two grounds: (a) Social justice demands recognition of the fact that high devotion, intelligence and character are expended upon the work of teaching without adequate compensation either in social recognition or in material tokens; and of the fact that the material reward is not sufficient to provide for protection in old age or disability. (b) Efficient organization demands provision for decent retirement of worn-out servants, instead of retaining them to the injury of the service.

2. The incidence of the charge. Three types of systems are discussed. (a) Expenses borne entirely by the employer—here the community or the State; (b) Expenses borne wholly by the workers—here the teachers; and (c) Expenses shared by employer and employee. The

chief objection to the first plan is that it removes incentive to thrift and to co-operation. It may actually, however, be merely an indirect means for enforcing savings of the employees, in an industrial system. Of course in a public service pension the charge is distributed thru the taxes. The second plan is virtually equivalent to a compulsory system of saving—it is withheld wage accumulated for the future benefit of the employee. The third system appears to be most just to the workers and most equitable to the employer or the government, resulting in closer co-operation and higher efficiency. Dr. Pritchett cautions us to keep distinct the questions of a just salary and of equitable relief for old age or disability.

3. The form of the pension system. There are many moot points on this subject, but four general principles should be considered as adequately proven. (a) Every teacher in the service should participate in the pension system. (b) The amount contributed by the individual and by the state should be determined by thoro actuarial investigation, but each teacher shall be treated as a unit. That is, the amount contributed by a teacher shall be fixed for the *individual*, according to age, etc., the same as her premium rate would be fixed by an insurance examiner. (c) Pension fund contributions of teachers who resign, are dismissed or die must be returned, with a fair rate of interest. This point is generally overlooked by those who have not made a special study of it. Even the majority of teachers do not seem to realize that this is a legitimate demand for them to make. (d) There should be a central administrative board, serving without salary, and representing all interested groups, with a paid expert for the executive work.

4. The cost of a pension system. This is a difficult question because it involves so many subsidiary problems. The complexity of a State's educational system, the length of time a teacher may be expected to render effective service under varying conditions, the average age of entry upon the service, the average length of service, the rates of wages, etc.,

all have to be considered. But once the desirability of a pension system is decided upon, the question of cost is merely one of calculation.

The need for protection for disability is very great, but has not been so generally recognized.

* * *

The retirement fund of the New York City public school teachers is made up of "absence deductions" and one per cent. of teachers' salaries deducted by the auditor, plus a sum contributed from the taxes. These three items are about equal in amount. But the amount paid to retired teachers each year is gradually increasing more rapidly than the income of the fund, so that during the year 1911-12, for example, the expenditures exceeded the income by over \$82,000. This means that the fund is not based on any scientific principles, and will either be automatically depleted or replenished by some drastic measure. In this city teachers who are dismissed or who resign get no refund whatever. In other words, teachers who serve but a short time—and they constitute the vast majority—must contribute to a savings fund from which they get no benefit whatever.

Under the by-laws of the Board of Education of the City of New York there are eligible lists from which must be selected the nominees for all positions in the teaching and supervisory staff except those of high-school principal, District and Associate Superintendents, and Examiners. For these positions it is still necessary to "see" men and women higher up. This is not exactly a political fact, but often assumes a political aspect—e. g., just before a vacancy in one of these grades has to be filled. One of the McKee bills before the State Legislature specifically concentrates the seeing activities of prospective candidates for the position of District Superintendent into a narrower range. That is, it will be necessary hereafter to see only the members of the Board of Education, and not the Superintendents. This may be considered a move in the direction of greater simplicity—for the politicians.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

WHAT THEY EXPECT OF US

PUBLIC SPIRIT, the manifestation of a desire to think first and last of the children in their charge, and of their duty to make them intelligent and loyal citizens—this is little observable in the associations of men and women teachers. Since their successful foray upon the City Treasury with the false slogan of "equal pay," the leaders of the Interborough Association of Women Teachers have worked unblushingly for their pocketbooks, with little showing of regard for any real educational interest. They have been fomenters of strife and of mutiny, and their aim seems to be to keep the schools in a turmoil.—Editorial, *The New York Times*, March 15, 1913.

PUBLIC SPIRIT, the manifestation of a desire to think first and last of the children in their charge, and of their duty to make them efficient and decent citizens—this is little observable in the associations of merchants and manufacturers. Since their successful (and successive) forays upon the various city, state and national treasuries with the false slogans of "protection" and "free trade" and "saving the country from panic" and sundry others, the leaders of commerce and industry have worked unblushingly for their pocketbooks, with little showing of regard for any real social interest. They have been fomenters of strife and division in the ranks of the workers, and their aim seems to be to keep the workers in subjection.

(When we consider how much the public—represented by the newspapers—expect of the teachers, compared to what it expects of itself—represented by the "business men"—we surely should feel proud.)

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